

GHANA NEWS ABROAD- OBO ADDY JOINS THE ANCESTORS



The Ghanaian versatile performer, percussionist, composer, and educator Obo Addy has passed away in far away Oregon, USA. He was 76. His career in music took him to Oregon, where he taught for years at Lewis and Clark College, while making records and introducing African music to new audiences.

A Ghanaian by birth, Addy was from a family with strong roots in music and spirituality. He told Oregon ArtBeat in 2004 about receiving an early education in the power of percussion.

"When I was, like, four years old, and watching my father dancing, and my older brothers were dancing, and the next day was when I really started playing what I heard," he told OPB.

Addy came to prominence during the 70s -- the same decade he moved to Portland. Over the years, his reputation as a dynamic performer was matched by his influence spreading Ghanaian and other styles of music with workshops and residencies. Among the many awards he received was a National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Addy's family, including his wife, six children and two step-children, are still making arrangements for a public memorial.

PRESS RELEASE:

Obo Addy master drummer, award-winning composer, brilliant musician, and skilled teacher passed away peacefully at 4 pm Thursday surrounded by family and friends. He had been battling liver cancer since 2007. Addy was 76 years old.

A public memorial is being planned, and will be announced at a later date. His family is directing his fans and friends to CaringBridge to leave messages, photos and memories, which will be shared with Addy's family. The family has also set up a page on www.indiegogo.com/oboaddy to help raise funds for costs related to his illness and funeral expenses.

Addy played music to the very end, joining with family, friends and musicians from throughout his life for a few last jam sessions in his final days. He passed away with music filling his ears.

Born January 15, 1936 in Accra, the capital of Ghana, Addy was one of 55 children of Jacob Kpani Addy, a medicine man who integrated rhythmic music into healing and other rituals. Addy was designated by his tribe as a master drummer by the age of six.

Addy's earliest musical influence was the traditional music of the Ga people, but he was also influenced as an adolescent by popular music from Europe and the United States. He got his professional start in Ghana by playing with the Joe Kelly Band, the Ghana Broadcasting Band, and the Farmer's Council Band, which played popular American and European music and the dance music of Ghana known as highlife.

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